

## Franklin NH Historical Society News

April 2016

Is spring here, or has it been here all along, despite the sporadic dives in temperature, barren trees and occasional snowfall? To be sure, this “winter” has been one of the strangest on record, and the hope certainly now is that the weather will remain moderate and warm so as not to additionally confuse the vegetation struggling to bloom through fall’s matted leaves. The lack of seasonal demarcation could also signal a rush to summer, with little or no spring at all. One thing is for certain, and that is that the Historical Society is most definitely on track to commence its monthly meeting schedule in high style. Beginning on Thursday, April 7th at 7 pm, past Society president Steve Foley will engage members and guests with a presentation on “How to Get Started on Determining your Family’s History”. Genealogy in many cases is the foundation of much of the research conducted or facilitated by historical societies everywhere. Steve will show how, right from your own home and with the aid of your computer, a seemingly daunting task can be tamed and made much easier than in the past. So much information is now online, the key is to access it efficiently with the help of proficient searches and often via subscription online services. If your interest is to find that horse thief, or hero, or celebrity in your family’s roots, this will be a fascinating and helpful evening at the Society’s building at Webster Place (directions to the Society, at 21 Holy Cross Road, can be found on the Society’s website, [www.franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org)).

The Society is poised for another eventful year, with programs such as the one above, a discussion updating the status of the Franklin Downtown Historical District, slide shows of recent acquisitions and more of the treasures found at the Franklin Public Library, Community Day May 14th, a plant sale, the High School Alumni Weekend beginning August 5th, and later in the year, NH Humanities musicians will delight all attendees with the music from the Civil War era. And of course, from May through Labor Day, the Society’s museum will once again be open every Sunday from 10 am to 2 pm for members, residents and visitors to immerse themselves in Franklin’s history via our ever-changing displays.

Even over the slow months of the winter, donations kept arriving to be inventoried and acknowledged. The list of “thank you’s” this month include: to Andy Nadeau, for a folder full of photos covering a myriad of images from Central Street, various mills, fires that occurred during his tenure with the Franklin Fire Department, and FFD equipment and personnel over its storied history, as well as a box of photos dating from the 1890’s to c. 1930 of individuals and groups, mostly unidentified (unfortunately), but all photographed in Franklin by, among others, the Currier and C.L. Hunt studios, and all kept by his grandmother, Eugenie Nadeau; to Kathy Fuller for donating a FSB billfold, a 1922 booklet of truck bodies (with a price list the likes of which we will never see again...), 45 rpm children’s records, and a fragile, irreplaceable, 1903 “birds eye” fold-out map of Lake Winnepesaukee; and finally for the gift from a dedicated collector who frequents local auctions and purchased then donated seven vintage card-mounted views of mill interiors and an exterior, a turn-of-the-century group shot inside the Memorial Street candlepin bowling alley, a group posed outside of Canado Hall, an 1890 group by a Webster Lake cottage, and a great pre-Memorial/Town Hall (in other words, pre-1892) shot of downtown, looking from Cemetery Hill towards Willow Hill. To all those who believe it is worth the effort to pass these symbols, artifacts and images of our past on to the Society for preservation, the entire board once again extends it heartfelt thanks.

This month’s composite scan is of an 1893 contract welcoming Fanny Rice (not Brice, of the Ziegfeld Follies, who was still a child when Fanny Rice was a star), a New England talent who became known throughout the country in the late 1800’s as the “Funniest Woman in America”, to the Franklin Opera House. To the left of this document is a scan of an 1895 Jordan Marsh bill for pants, 50 cents, plus postage 9 cents, less a credit for 55 cents, for a total of only 4 cents! Both of these items are a direct link to Norma Bushman, from whose donations to the Society these came. Norma’s grandmother was the Mrs. C.P. Stevens who purchased the pants on a trip from Franklin to Boston. [As an interesting side note, on the invoice is listed the phone number of Jordan Marsh...in 1895, only about ten years since the telephone had gained public acceptance.] The “C.P.” in Mrs. Stevens name stood for Clarence P. Stevens, Norma’s grandfather, who among other enterprises in

